

Appeals and Complaints A1506

1.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

To ensure that any appeal by a client against any decision of the company in relation to certification or registration, or any complaint about the service delivered, is handled promptly and correctly, to the satisfaction of all parties if possible.

2.0 PROCEDURE

2.1 Processing appeals

The following is the process for recording and processing appeals of certification decisions:

- The MD acknowledges receipt of the appeal in writing to the appellant.
- The MD convenes a meeting of the Appeals and Complaints Board which consists of the Directors and the CSI. The MD ensures that no members of the Board were involved in the subject of the appeal. If this proves to be the case, the individual(s) will be excused from the Board during the appeal in question.
- The MD informs the client of the names of the Board.
- The MD informs the Board of the facts of the case and provides them with all the relevant information and records including information on any previous similar appeals.
- During the appeal process the client may continue to use the certification mark.
- The Board evaluates the facts of the specific appeal and based on a majority of the members, they will decide whether the appeal is justified.
- If the appeal is not deemed to be justified, the MD will advise the appellant in writing of this decision and the reasons behind the decision.
- The Board then determines the appropriate action to resolve the matter. The MD ensures that any agreed action is implemented in a timely manner and he monitors it subsequently to ensure its effectiveness.
- Upon receipt of the decision of the Board the MD issues a written decision to the client.
- The appeal process should be completed within 15 working days of receipt of the appeal. In the event that the process exceeds this timeframe, the MD will issue progress reports to the appellant at appropriate intervals.

2.2 Processing complaints

2.3 Complaints from clients

The following is the process for recording and processing complaints received from clients:

- The MD acknowledges receipt of the complaint in writing to the complainant.
- The MD determines if the complaint relates to MSC certification activities. If it does not, the MD advises the complainant and the case is closed.
- If the complaint relates to MSC certification activities, the MD convenes a meeting of the Appeals and Complaints Board which consists of the Directors and the CSI. The MD ensures that no members of the Board were involved in the subject of the complaint. If this proves to be the case, the individual(s) will be excused from the Board during the processing of the complaint in question.
- The MD informs the Board of the facts of the case and provides them with all the relevant information and records.
- The Board evaluates the facts and based on a majority of the members, they will decide whether the complaint is justified.
- If the complaint is not deemed to be justified, the MD will advise the complainant in writing of this decision and the reasons behind the decision.
- The Board then determines the appropriate action to resolve the matter. The MD ensures that any agreed action is implemented in a timely manner and he monitors it subsequently to ensure its effectiveness.
- Upon receipt of the decision of the Board the MD issues a written decision to the client.
- The complaints process should be completed within 25 working days of receipt of the appeal. In the event that the process exceeds this timeframe, the MD will issue progress reports to the complainant at appropriate intervals.

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Note: In some cases, the client may provide feedback without expecting a response. In some cases the MD may decide that this warrants the full complaint process. However, in these cases it may not be appropriate to inform the client of the investigation or its results. The MD will decide on the appropriate action in those cases and records will be maintained in the Improvement Log.

2.3.1 Complaints about certified clients

Where MSC receives a complaint from a third party in relation to a certified client, the approach outlined in section 2.2.1 is followed.

In addition, the MD notifies the certified client of the complaint and also the ultimate outcome.

2.3.2 Publication

The MD shall determine, together with the client and the complainant, whether and, if so, to what extent, the subject of the complaint and its resolution shall be made public. The MD shall determine and ensure appropriate levels of confidentiality with regard to the complainant.

2.4 Penalty

The Managing Director must ensure that a client who appeals or complains does not suffer any penalty or unfair treatment as a result.

2.5 Corrective action

Where deemed necessary by the MD, the issues leading to appeals or complaints will be addressed via the corrective action process (**ref A04**). In particular, investigations relating to complaints about certified clients will include an examination of the effectiveness of the client's certified management system.

3.0 Related Documents

- **B117 Appeals & Complaints Log**